

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Kevin Abrams and I am the Executive Director of the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission which is the Local Development that serves Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming Counties. I appear before you today on behalf of the Partners for Regional Economic Performance, more commonly known as PREP. With me today in the audience are other PREP partners including (acknowledge others from PREP who will be in the audience – Gary Smith from Chester County Economic Development Corporation, Vito Gallo representing Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, Dave Black, Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC and PEDDA, more...)

Let me provide you with a brief evolution of PREP. Prior to the Corbett Administration, the Industrial or Economic Development Corporations, The Industrial Resource Centers, the Local Development Districts and the Small Business Development Centers all had their own respective line items within DCED's budget and all implemented their own respective work plans. PREP consolidated the four line items into one and created one work plan of all four of the previously mentioned service providers. This has resulted in a totally new approach to the customer and has produced several success stories in the region that I represent.

That's the good news. The bad news is that these four service providers have experienced an approximate sixty two percent (62%) reduction in DCED funding since 2005, and the level of services that we are able to provide has declined proportionately. To further compound the situation, in many instances, State funding is used to match, or leverage Federal funding, so these losses have been devastating to say the least.

The PREP partners view Innovate PA as a wonderful opportunity to:

1. Reactivate services formerly provided to our clients
2. Develop new and creative programs and services
3. Provide resources to pursue Federal funding by having adequate matching funds.

I hope you will look favorably on Innovate PA, I thank you the opportunity to appear before you today and I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you!